

# The expressive psyche: The study of a psychotherapeutic process combined with plastic production

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## Abstract

The present case study demonstrates a way of using expressive resources in psychotherapy and the symbolic analysis of this process. It is dedicated to the trajectory of a patient who, when starting psychotherapy, suffers from intense anxiety and was unable to visualize a future for his life. The psychodynamic reading identifies the accentuated action of complexes and lack of contact with the inner world. Throughout the process the patient accesses his unconscious through his dreams, his expressiveness and the dialogue with the psychotherapist. Many achievements are made during the process: the mother and father complexes are revisited and transformed; the awareness of unconscious contents through symbolic understanding creates a path for his psychic energy, which results in a new vitality; the symbolic perspective becomes part of his life, previously imprisoned in a literal, concrete vision. Once in possession of these resources, his personality strengthens and his hero manifests himself, returning to offer him protagonism and creative perspectives in life. This work seeks, therefore, to bring together analytical psychology study and practice: academic research, clinical care, theoretical foundation and the use of plastic expressiveness, without the intention of exhausting the possibilities of reading and understanding the case or the areas of knowledge addressed.

## Descriptors

art therapy, analytical psychotherapy, symbol.

### Conflict of interests:

The author states no professional or personal interest that may create a conflict of interests regarding this manuscript.



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## A psique expressiva: o estudo de um processo psicoterápico aliado à produção plástica

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### Resumo

O estudo de caso apresentado demonstra uma maneira de utilizar recursos expressivos em psicoterapia e a análise simbólica desse processo. Ele se dedica à trajetória de um paciente que, ao ingressar em psicoterapia, sofre de ansiedade intensa e não vê perspectivas na vida. A leitura psicodinâmica identifica a ação acentuada de complexos e a falta de contato com o mundo interno. Ao longo do processo o paciente acessa seu inconsciente mediante o contato com os sonhos, sua expressividade plástica e diálogo com a psicoterapeuta. Muitas conquistas são realizadas: os complexos materno e paterno são revisitados e transformados; a conscientização de conteúdos inconscientes por meio da compreensão simbólica oferece ao paciente um caminho para sua energia psíquica, o que resulta em uma nova vitalidade; a perspectiva simbólica passa a fazer parte da sua vida, antes aprisionada a uma visão literal, concreta. Uma vez em posse desses recursos, sua personalidade se fortalece e seu herói se manifesta, voltando a lhe oferecer protagonismo e perspectivas criativas na vida. Este trabalho busca, assim, aproximar estudo e prática em psicologia analítica: a pesquisa acadêmica, o atendimento clínico, a fundamentação teórica e o uso da expressividade plástica, sem a pretensão de esgotar as possibilidades de leitura e compreensão do caso ou das áreas de conhecimento abordadas.

### Descritores

arte-terapia, psicoterapia analítica, símbolos.

## La psique expresivo: el estudio de un proceso psicoterapéutico combinado con la producción plástica

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### Resumen

El estudio de caso presentado demuestra una manera de utilizar los recursos expresivos en la psicoterapia y realiza el análisis simbólico de este proceso. Se dedica a la historia de un paciente que, al entrar en la psicoterapia, sufre de ansiedad intensa y no ve perspectivas en la vida. La lectura psicodinámica identifica la intensa acción de complejos y la falta de contacto con el mundo interior. Durante todo el proceso el paciente accede a su inconsciente mediante sus propios sueños, su expresión plástica y el diálogo con el psicoterapeuta. Muchos logros son obtenidos durante el proceso: los complejos maternos y paternos son revisados y procesados; el conocimiento de los contenidos inconscientes mediante la comprensión simbólica proporciona al paciente un camino para su energía psíquica, lo que se transforma en una nueva vitalidad; la perspectiva simbólica se convierte en parte de su vida, antes encarcelada en una visión literal, concreta. Una vez en posesión de estos recursos, su personalidad se fortalece y su héroe se manifiesta, volviendo a ofrecerle liderazgo y perspectivas creativas en la vida. Este trabajo busca así mismo, establecer relaciones entre el estudio y la práctica en psicología analítica: la investigación académica, la atención clínica, la base teórica y el uso de la expresión plástica, sin pretensión de agotar las posibilidades de lectura y comprensión por las áreas de conocimiento abordadas.

### Descriptorios

arte-terapia, psicoterapia analítica, símbolo.

## Introduction

This study describes a case dealt with under Jungian psychotherapy that was conducted during two years and three months and starts when the patient is 49 years old. He is presented with a fictitious name, Érico. The patient, a fine artist, intersperses pervades the psychotherapeutic process with paintings and drawings he makes during the sessions and outside them. Bearing in mind his preferred language, psychotherapy embraces the patient's spontaneous expressiveness. In fact, it is one of the goals of this study to demonstrate how treatment provided within the patient's particularities finds on Jungian theory and practice plenty of support to respond to the demands of different psychological types and their languages.

The narrative represents just a clipping of all the information inherent to the case. Therefore it neither intends to exhaust the vast symbolism presented nor takes the psychotherapeutic process as a unique and definitive formula to respond to the patient's needs. It does intend highlighting the richness of its images and, from them, present the foundations for the use of expressive resources in Jungian psychotherapy.

### About concepts of analytic psychology

The dynamics of the psyche predisposes, according to Jung (1975), the contact of consciousness with unconscious contents. When unknown contents of the psyche emerge in consciousness, there is a transformation of the psyche as a whole. On the other hand, the unconscious becomes transformed when expressing itself.

The contact with emotions through direct or indirect expression (projections and symbol) enables the awareness of unconscious contents. Jung (1990a) uses affection as a **synonym of emotion** and sustains: "The essential basis of our personality is affectivity. Thinking and acting are, as it were, mere symptoms of affectivity" (Jung, p. 31; OC III: 78).

Affection has its roots in the bodily, physiological dimension, and is related to sensations. In its psychological aspect affection is linked to sentiment, although diverges from it because sentiment is one of the functions of conscience. Affection discerns sentiment as a process that relates the self to certain content, giving it a certain value, regardless of considering it pleasant or not.

Affection also occurs as a disposition that may disregard the momentary conscious content or the perceptions, and may be linked to a memory. Feeling is a subjective process and has a judgmental disposition. Despite the distinction between emotion and feeling their connection is intrinsic. Feeling may be moved by will, whereas emotion, generally, may not. Emotions cannot be managed as ideas or feelings, because they are identical to certain

physical conditions, hence, deeply rooted in the heavy matter of the body (Jung, 1989).

Hillman (1992) emphasizes that the transformation of emotion is marked by the symbol, that contains an arrangement, a specific intensity of energy and indicates the direction of transformation. Therefore, emotion carries within the ability of transformation in the sense of restoring psychic balance. As a form of condensation or outcome, Hillman sustains (1992) "Emotion is the transformation of energy from its conventional environment through assimilation by the entire psyche, initiated by a symbol" (p. 287). On its turn, the symbol is constantly constructed and transformed by the psyche. It works as a mediator between consciousness and the unconscious, altering, as a consequence, the original emotional states. From the point of view of analytic psychology, the reading of emotional aspects through symbolic communication offers information about the psychological particularities of every individual, the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious, revealing the movements necessary to development.

The concept of projection has great importance for the understanding of expressiveness. The worth of drawing as an instrument of investigation of general development, pathologies and personality traits has been demonstrated by researchers, who understood the value of this instrument based on the concept of projection (Kolk, 1984; Trinca, 1976; Hammer, 1989). Most part of the research on projection in expressive processes has psychoanalytic foundations, and recognizes that the projection is connected, basically, to defense mechanisms. Regardless of this tendency, Freud himself (1987), in "*Totem e tabu*" (Totem and taboo), opened the possibility that some contents projected may not be defensive: "The projection is not specially created for defense purposes, but it also arises when there are no conflicts" (p. 857). Its origin and scope are larger than those identified in defensive processes. The effect of the primary psychic processes on the outer world is the animism, the magical thinking and the omnipotence inherent of native populations, children and neurotics. Artistic creation, according to Freud, is also a projection of the artist on his or her own work.

According to Telles (2000), the concept of projection implies very deep and complex references that could not be ignored in the choice of the word. In sum, it involves practically all the problems that psychological Science seeks to explain:

In Freud's own indication [...] about the "normal" projection it is implicit the general structure of the individual: first of all, the sensory-perceptive way of informing reality which he shares with congeners of the same species [...]; all the problematic of learning [...]; all study of memory and of own perception (modern studies

about sense-perception, for example), finally the relationship between “consciousness” and “the unconscious” is at stake[...]. (p. 67)

In this way, in psychoanalytical thought, the concept of projection is intrinsically linked to the structure of human psyche and responds to its idea of psyche. Jung (2009) understands that:

projection means to transfer a subjective process to an object. [...] Therefore, a projection is a dissimilation process, since it withdraws from the individual some subjective content that gets somehow incorporated into the object. Through projection the individual gets rid of painful or incompatible contents, but also of positive values that, for whatever reason, as for example, self-underestimation, are inaccessible to him. (p. 436; OC VI: 881)

Furthermore, Jung (2009) asserts that the process of projection occurs when there is a need of undoing the state of identity between subject and object: “The projection is based on archaic **identity** between subject and object, however it can only be denominated projection when the need to dissolve the identity between subject and object arises.” [Highlighted in the original] (p. 436; OC VI: 881).

Based on these assumptions, it is believed that the contact with projections created in the expressive process may bring a series of information to the subjects’ consciousness, enhancing their self-knowledge and development.

The understanding of the symbol as the one uniting, bridging aspects of the psyche is approached by various authors in analytic psychology. According to Whitmont (2002), the pursuit for the symbolic experience has urgency and meaning for our time and finds a useful and whole expression in analytic psychology. It establishes a dialog between diverse dimensions: the abstract and the material; the individual and the collective; the past and the future; the divine and the earthly; consciousness and the unconscious.

Before its complexity, data of a rational and irrational nature participate in its composition, coming from the different functions of consciousness (thought, feeling, sensation and intuition). Jung (2009) states that:

The symbol is always a product of a highly complex nature because it is composed by data from all the psychological functions. Therefore, it is neither of a rational nor of an irrational nature. It has a side that speaks to reason and another inaccessible to it because it is not only constituted by rational, but also by irrational data provided by plain internal and external perception. The burden of presentiment and meaning contained in the symbol affects both thought and feeling, and the plasticity peculiar to it, when presented to the senses in a perceptible way, instigates sensation and intuition. (p. 912; OC VI: 912)

In Jungian theory, the way in which psychological transformation occurs is related to the semiotic and symbolic approaches. The semiotic approach refers to the causal point of view, the symbolic to the final. In the following quotation, Jung (1990b) asserts the importance of both:

There cannot be evolution just with intention and will. There must be also the attractive symbol, which value exceeds the cause. Moreover, there cannot be symbol formation without the soul remaining, for a rather long time, on the essential facts, this is: until the inner or outer need of the vital process produces a transformation in the energy. (p. 23; OC VIII/1: 47)

Jung's fundamental interest in relation to the symbols resides in their ability to transform and redirect instinctive energy. Creativity or, as defined by Jung, the creative instinct, is one of the ways of channeling the instinctive energy. Jung considers that evolution depends on the integration of the symbol to the personality, which, in its turn, derives both from the conscious intention (the ego) and the natural transformation that operates in the psyche.

The image carries the symbol: it is the way the symbol expresses itself. Understanding when an image is symbolic is tremendously important for Jungian theory. The presence of a living symbol occurs when the image constitutes the best expression of something meaningful. The living symbol is pregnant with meaning and shelters unknown aspects. The fact that an image has a symbolic value depends mainly on the attitude of the observer. In this way, for the mental energy transformation to happen, the subject's attitude towards the symbol is fundamental.

Fordham (1957) asserts that the concepts of image and symbol must not be confused and the content of any image in particular – whether it is the product of a dream or of the imagination – can bring complex questions that tend to mirror the diversified use of the word **symbol**. In the case of the vision of an external object, the neurons stimulated in the brain form a pattern in the cortex that is different from the model of the object being observed. In this sense, the conception of the original image as a photographic reproduction does not hold; it is, apparently, the information available to relate the mental image to the external object. Neurophysiologists call this a symbolic image, because it represents, in a close enough manner, the external object so that its mental existence can be established by inference.

It is evident that in dealing with the image, analytical psychology does not refer to the mental reproduction of the actual object, but to the inner image, the product of fantasy. This image is only indirectly related to the external object. Jungian theory considers the inner image as a composition of diverse materials, complex, but provided of its own sense and unity. It is also the expression of unconscious contents that are useful in that moment. In this way, the image conveys both the conscious and unconscious situation of the moment, based on their mutual relationships. For Jung, although it is not

usually attributed to the image the status of reality, it may, in certain circumstances, represent an intimate reality that may exceed the psychological meaning of the exterior reality. This intimate reality is a unit having its own meaning and is useful to the individual in question. It is product of the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious.

According to Furth (2004), Jung was aware of the worth of expressive means for the production of symbols; however, he did not develop any method for the interpretation of such productions.

In Jungian theory (1986a), the process that relates the contrasts, the psychic opposites, is named the transcendent function, necessary to the formation of symbols that express polarities:

By “transcendent function” nothing mysterious, supernatural or metaphysical so to speak is to be understood, but a psychological function which in its own way can be compared to a mathematical function of imaginary and real numbers. The psychological “transcendent” function arises from the union of conscious and unconscious contents. (p. 96; OC VIII/2: 131)

It is a natural process that can be externally stimulated. The manifestation produced by the tension of opposites can gain a visible form, through visual, written or dramatized expression. This product, of a symbolic character, is created by the tension of the opposites and also expresses them.

The symbol can be seen as the third factor in the relationship mind/body, as said by Ramos (2006). According to the author, the mind, because of its ability to symbolize, can be considered a producer of codes, a processor and transmitter of information from the organism to both the psyche and the soma. The information received and processed at the semantic level can be translated into information to be received and processed at the somatic level and vice versa. Jung concept of the symbol as an energy transformer can be understood as an information transformer in a system (immune, for instance) into another (consciousness, for example).

The way of working in this relationship varies from case to case. According to the author, the transition from organic or emotional symptoms to conscious awareness can be achieved through different resources. Jung describes active imagination and methods like drama, visual art (painting, drawing, modeling) or dance –in some cases– as producers of remarkable therapeutic effects. Every illness has expression in the psyche and the body, simultaneously, according to Jung (1986a):

As psyche and matter are enclosed in a single and same world, and they are permanently in contact with each other, and ultimately, lie on transcendent and non-representable factors, there is not only the possibility but also the probability that matter and psyche are different aspects of the same thing. (p. 152; OC VIII/2: 418)

## Brief history of the use of expressive resources in the area of healthcare

We can say that every gesture, expression or response of an individual translates, somehow, his or her personality. In plastic art production, the psychomotor activities and the contents stamped on paper express the individual's tendencies.

The study of artistic expressiveness and the application of different expressive languages in the area of health started in the XIX Century. In 1876, Max Simon published some research on artistic manifestations of people with mental illnesses and made a classification of the pathologies based on that. In 1888, Cesare Lombroso analyzed drawings from mental patients seeking to identify psychopathologies. Jean-Martin Charcot and Charles Richet also studied and took an interest in the mental patients' art (Carvalho & Andrade, 1995).

In Brazil, two names combined artistic expression to treatment: Osório César, in São Paulo, and Nise da Silveira, in Rio de Janeiro. Like Jung, the latter used theatre, dance, writing and painting as means of producing spontaneous images.

In the United States, from the 1940s, Margareth Naumburg (1955) launched the use of art into the field of healthcare through the systematization of art therapy. Naumburg affirms (1955): "The intellectualization and exaggerated verbalism of our culture have been imposed on the deeper and more primitive levels of our unconscious mode of imagined expression" (p. 435). According to Carvalho and Andrade (1995), another strand was created by Edith Kramer, centered on the therapeutic value of the creative process and art making per se; and a third strand developed from the work of Janie Rhyne, who asserts the therapeutic value of artistic activity is both in the creative process and in the possible further considerations and elaborations of the work produced.

Because of the varied ways of using expressive resources combined with therapy, today there is concern, in the field of art therapy, with the use of different nomenclature for the diverse approaches.

The growth of this area of interdisciplinary nature allowed the application of art therapy in private practices and different types of institutions, attending to diverse age groups and demands in healthcare (Ciornai, 2004). With this expansion, discussions arouse seeking to clarify its theoretical and methodological outline. Vasconcelos and Giglio (2006) assert two great trends in the field of art therapy: "art as therapy" and "art psychotherapy", and they comment: "It is essential to consider that these two trends compose the field of art therapy, and there is not a clear conceptual distinction being used in Brazil yet." (p. 43).

According to Samuels, Shorter and Plaut (1988), Jung introduced the term **active imagination** in 1935 to describe the process of daydreaming:

From the beginning, the individual concentrates on a specific point, a disposition, image or specific events; then, allows a chain of associated fantasies to unfold gradually taking on a dramatic character. After that, the images take a life of their own, and develop according to their own logic. The conscious doubt must be overcome consequently there be permission for anything to affect consciousness. (p. 99)

The procedure enables contents previously isolated to become more or less clear and articulated. It is possible to deal in different ways with the content that arises (Samuels et al., 1988):

The process of active imagination can itself have a positive and vitalizing effect, however the content (like in a dream) can also be painted [...]. The patients can be motivated to write down their fantasies to fix the sequence in which they occurred and these records can, subsequently, be taken to ANALYSIS for INTERPRETATION [highlights of the original]. (p. 100)

In the decade of the 1920s, Jung began using the expressive language of art as part of treatment. In some cases, he allowed patients to express their dreams in visual form, recognizing possibilities of healing in the symbols produced. In his view, the kingdom of the unconscious, both in the collective and personal dimensions, can be artistically represented through images and symbols. These symbols can appear in different languages, in dance, music, and plastic art. For Jung, such techniques allow the patients to be active in front of their own psyche, acting in the direction of understanding their fantasies and dreams when these are materialized. After that, when confronted with the characteristics and details of their production, the patients approach their own life and change their perspective of it. It is like if they displaced their center of gravity, identifying forces that recognize as important, of which they were not aware before.

The treatment of the psyche, in Jungian approach, takes into account the natural movement for its development, what can be facilitated by the disposition of consciousness to contact the elements emerging from the unconscious. Jung affirms that the unconscious complements or compensates consciousness in the direction of equilibrium. The psychotherapist is capable of following and facilitating the patient's psychic movement. The expressive processes can propitiate this communication.

### **Expressiveness and personality: foundations of image interpretation**

The idea that each act, expression or response of an individual somehow presents their personality is popular. Its principles are demonstrated in the work of different researchers dedicated to the systematic study of artworks in different contexts or visual creations, seeking to reveal aspects of the creator's personality. Human productions are raw material from which psychologists can forge clinical instruments.

Bruchon (1972) considers that “Expressive movements can offer to the study of human personality precious and original supplementary information”. The psychomotor behaviors refer to psychodynamic, projective, of temperament, expressive and adaptive features.

The studies on personality via aesthetic expression that have been demonstrating systematic results are mainly directed to the investigation of chromatic and achromatic drawing. Studying drawings made by the same individuals, in time intervals, Machover (1949) observed that their structural and formal aspects are less subject to variability than their contents. Whether the individual draws their figure large or small, where on the page it is drawn; worked with long and continuous or short lines, or with toothed lines; if the figure looks aggressive, rigid or fluid; how the essential proportions of the body are, if there is symmetry, a tendency to leave parts incomplete, mistakes, shadows; all these factors refer to the structure of personality. The patients’ drawing can keep these formal characteristics remarkably similar through the years. This is an indication of the depth and stability of the parameters that the expressive aspects offer about the personality of the subject studied.

Kolk (1984) highlights the capacity of expressive drawing for both general and psychopathology development and as a means of contact for the investigation and psychotherapeutic treatment. The interpretation of a drawing starts from a phenomenological vision, which takes into account the functional meaning of the parts involved, reaching a symbolic analysis. An isolated stroke means nothing: every detail must be seen in its relationship with the whole.

Trinca (1976) explores the techniques of thematic apperception and free drawing. The author describes the graphic techniques that include stories and storyboards as an aid to investigate personality. He considers that the sequence is useful to the expressive process. The depth of the understanding produced by the continuity of production had been already investigated by Caligor (1952).

Hammer (1989) proposes a general structure for the reading of projective drawings with the observation of the following aspects: sequence, size, pressure, strokes, details, symmetry, location and movement. He asserts that the patients’ drawings tend to demonstrate consistency in their structural aspects over the years.

Furth (2004) suggests a technique of image reading based on Jung’s theory of the complexes, which he calls “focal point”, and starts with the observation of the first impression seeking to identify the central aspects in the drawings. Later, asks questions about the materials, the size of the paper and its relationship with the drawing: color, shape, direction, movement, positioning, number of objects presented and omitted. And following synthesize what has been discovered from the individual components. This information is gathered as a whole, raising hypothesis about the directions to which they point. Once all the complexes are connected, it is possible to make contact with them from any contents, because one content takes to another (in the same way as

a complex takes to another). The a priori meaning of certain expressive aspects has relative value for Furth (2004). One must know them, but not become attached to them. The relationship between the different elements that makes up the particularity of each work can provide a new sense to a certain meaning previously acknowledged.

Bach (1990) studied drawings of children with serious illnesses. For the interpretation of the images, she proposed parameters to understand the use of color, spatial orientation, time units and some specific themes, understood as archetypical.

Abt (2005) considers that "This magic effect of the creation of images is a first step in the transformation of an emotion" (p. 33). For him, we all are born with the ability of reading images. All the little children and their mothers understand one another by body language, which is pictorial. The choices made to compose an artwork object have always a meaning that we can approach through symbolic understanding. In the Jungian approach, the study of symbols presumes the understanding that the psyche has different dimensions. Because of this, the images are observed as a product of an archetypical structure in which the contents of the collective and personal unconscious and of consciousness coexist. The archetypical structure expressed by an image is susceptible to be read. The typical motifs give guidance on their meaning to the experienced image reader, but they do not exhaust the question. Their personal dimension, that includes consciousness and the personal unconscious, depends on the dialogue with who produced the image so that it can be explained. The understanding of the image depends on the understanding of the relationship among all the dimensions of consciousness expressed in that.

### Case study as an investigative method

As Chizzotti (2003) asserts, a case study is

[...] a comprehensive characterization to designate a number of research studies that collect and record data of one particular case, or various, to organize an orderly and critical report of an experience, or assess it analytically, with the objective of making decisions about it or proposing a transformative action. (p. 102)

This method is based on the assumption that the case is a meaningful unit of the whole; therefore it is sufficient to support a reliable judgment and to propose an intervention. Standard assessment instruments were not used to monitor the patients' condition and their evolution.

In this study, it was chosen to assess, describe and discuss the case clinically, according to the theoretical reference of C. G. Jung **analytical psychology**. The analysis was done through a longitudinal approach focused on the images produced in the sessions and offered a notion of the whole, treating the case from the beginning to the end.

When considering the clinical approach, the patient's communications that are susceptible to interpretation are diverse. This study was focused on aesthetic expressiveness because the patient chose to express himself mainly through art.

In this sense, the work was benefited with the agreement of his preferred communication mode. Adds up to this, the interest in demonstrating the richness of analytic psychology, previous to different languages and particularly to the quantity and quality of the information arising from the interpretation of images.

### On the use of expressiveness in the sessions

Throughout this study, the psychotherapist will be named "P.". In her first session, P. receives the patient's complaints and introduces her working method. She tells Érico to feel comfortable expressing himself through art. He naturally starts to say, in some sessions: "today I'd like to paint!" and does that quickly and joyfully. Once the works are finished, P. asks him to talk about them. She asks if the works have titles, what he sees in them and what they allow him to remember or associate. Usually, the patient speaks little about them.

After Érico's speech, as a way of incentive and investigation, P. describes the aesthetic aspects of the work. With this, she suggests that Érico has enlarged his contact with his work. In Érico's process, this approach usually enables the emergence of feelings and associations that are considered in the reading of each work. Other factors linked to the clinical sessions come into play in the reading: Érico's history and the examination of the case, the expansion he suggested and P.'s own subjective disposition to understand him.

### On the management and image analysis method

The investigation of Érico's expressive process has its starting point in his expressive tendency. Many times, Érico prefers painting over talking about what he is living. Visual expression is Érico's main language. In this sense, the reading of the case prioritizes the artworks and seeks to link them to verbalization. In the approach to the images, only the central contents of each communication are highlighted, emphasizing the sequence of works, since the detailed reading of images is a complex and long task. The paths to approach an image are diverse. Furth (2004) method is adopted here, because it is the most synthetic. Besides of determining the **focal point** of every image, it is attempt to relate the main themes shown throughout the imagery process, seeking to understand, in the end, the process as a whole. For this, the study of a sequence of images is used as reference. When analyzing a series of dreams, Jung (1991) affirms that the sequence of works reveals the movements of the unconscious, therefore, it is fundamental so that we can understand its dynamics.

Érico's artworks are presented in many different ways: some pieces are brought ready from home. Others, he makes on his way to therapy. Some are made in the session. Many are brought and are not worked at the session, because of the large number of artworks. In this study the attention is centered in the pieces made during the sessions, assuming that the choice of the works to be dealt with in the analytical setting is meaningful.

Considering the limited extension for this study, a brief summary of the process will be elaborated, without the pretense of exhausting the possibilities of reading and understanding of the case. The amplifications denote the main meanings that arise in P.'s mind, from which are exposed the possibilities of reading and inclusion of unconscious contents in the therapeutic alchemic vessel. In parallel, verbal narratives and dreams are also used. The pictorial expressions of dreams are observed as Érico's interpretations, and not as dreams in themselves. In this sense, the intention is to be careful in maintaining the particularities of each expressive sphere: dreams, the aesthetic expression of the dream, the experience, and the verbal expression of the experience. The communication of each one of these realms depends on Érico's "translation" putting forth his views of the facts, and not representing the fact in itself.

### Ethical cares

The case reported here is a true story, only the names are fictitious. The patient was asked before writing this work based on his case and he provided a "written informed consent" authorizing its publication. The ethical safeguards related to the case comply with the formal regulations of the Regional Psychology Council (2005).

### Description of the therapeutic process start

Érico is 49 years old. He is tanned, 1.60 m tall (short for a man), with permanent dark circles under his eyes. Dressed in a casual style, his clothes are well cared for. He is a fine artist and the second child of a couple of public servants. Their first child is a woman. Érico reports that his parents always argued and, during a few years (when he was six or seven) they were separated. They were invasive with their children. Érico does not get on with his sister, because for him she is weak, envious and incompetent, and he says his parents always favored her in his detriment.

The patient has always felt unconfident and rejected, although his mother has been overprotective. He sees his father as coarse and chauvinist, because he betrayed his mother throughout their marriage. His relationship with him has been distant since childhood. He considers himself to be very different from his father: sensitive, faithful and intense in relationships. When he was a little child he won a fine art contest at school, but he did not have the courage to continue producing art. He felt different from everyone, and frowned upon because of that. He never liked soccer or swearing, and thought that people who liked were very rude.

At school he was smaller than his colleagues: thin and short. In the adolescence this difference increased, because only when he was 17 his body was sexually mature; he felt ashamed about that and believes that he closed himself off to the world at that time. He served the army, had an excellent performance and was awarded a medal. After the military service he decided to leave Santos and came to São Paulo to be an art teacher. He considers that his life started to collapse eight years ago. At 22 he married Carmem (fictitious name). In his words: "Eight years ago my marriage got sick, went to the ICU and then died". A year ago agreed to a separation, but for financial reasons, he continues living with his ex-wife in the same house. His dog died eight years ago – he suffered very much with this loss. He ceased earning money, also eight years ago.

His ex-wife is rigid and knows how to value herself, opposed to what he thinks of himself. She is an excellent professional. She developed an autoimmune disease that left her with spots on her skin. He helped her as much as he could, but their sexual relationship became worse and worse since then, about eight years ago. She started to avoid him and grew apart from him. Érico affirms that she would not help him when he needs, but he always helps her. He drives and she does not. She always asks him to drive her around and he does it with pleasure. When he needs help, she is cold and indifferent. Once he got sick and she did not even ask if he wanted some medicine. He had to go to hospital on his own. As he earns less money than his ex-wife, nowadays Érico somewhat depends on her financially.

He has some students and sporadic jobs. He has been looking for a job, but has not found anything. He has been called for interviews that did not result in a job contract. He gets some money from his parents to complete his budget. But feels very embarrassed about that, he thinks he should be giving comfort to his parents at this age, taking them to travel and not getting anything from them.

To believe in life is difficult for him, because everything that comes his way seems to violate his sensitivity or restrict his ambitions. He always feels diminished. New friendships and love relationships (that appear frequently because people like him) are avoided, with the excuse that he has to improve financially and then have love experiences. He flees love. At work he needs to be recognized and sheltered because he often gets offended with comments about him.

Érico arrives earlier to the sessions and never misses one, except in a case of extreme necessity. When this happens he notifies in advance that will not attend. He thanks the sessions and praises P. more than once in the start of the process. Although he says he feels better, as soon as the session with P. starts, she realizes that he still suffers a great deal and that a long path lies ahead of him before he can be well. Érico suffers with lack of self-confidence and anxiety and these symptoms remain for a few months.

## 2012 main topics

Érico arrives to psychotherapy while in psychiatric treatment, taking medication for depression and anxiety. He feels very skeptical about life and is permanently anxious.

He speaks about his relationship with his mother, who calls him several times during the week. He avoids talking to her and feels guilty. Érico's mother speaks non-stop and reproaches him for not giving her proper attention. The patient is bothered because he receives some money from his parents to complete his monthly earnings. P. asks if he gives attention to his mother, thinking that he owes this to her, for the money he receives. He says no, but is perceptible that the question makes him reflect on that. The initial thematic is the relationship with his parents, with his sister and with his wife. He does not feel comfortable with anyone. He does not have friends. When someone in the street tries to start a conversation making comments like "why are you so gloomy?" he says he hates it.

The first oneiric images are of people: flashes, images in which he feels hate of many familiar faces. After three months of psychotherapy he dreams of an old house that burned with his father inside. We work his father's image, their history together and his new view of him, resulting from the death of the old image. The new vision of his father throws some understanding of the situation of a man married to a dominating woman who demeans the masculine figure. He studies English at the "*Cultura Inglesa*" network, to improve his chances of getting a place in the master's course of *Universidade de São Paulo* (University of São Paulo). This is one of his projects: elaborate a master's dissertation. But, to continue the course is a big issue and a challenge for Érico. He does not feel up to his colleagues. He is always about to give up the course, because he feels humiliated for not being able to speak English as well as they do. He says that some teachers reaffirmed his potential and facilitated his learning process. He feels thankful for that, but he does not think he is capable of progressing into the next semester. Every time he sits an exam, he shivers and has chills or gets sick. He experiences terrible feelings of inferiority and has already given up studying many times. The following semester, someone in the school or a teacher persuade him to resume the course.

He is sociable in the classroom, prompts his colleagues to make friends. However, when they invite him for a drink or a chat, he refuses or finds some excuse and does not go out with them. He lives a solitary life.

Artworks done throughout 2012 are, basically, in black and white. Reveal detachment from the inner and outer worlds, the intense action of the mother complex (Figures 1-6).



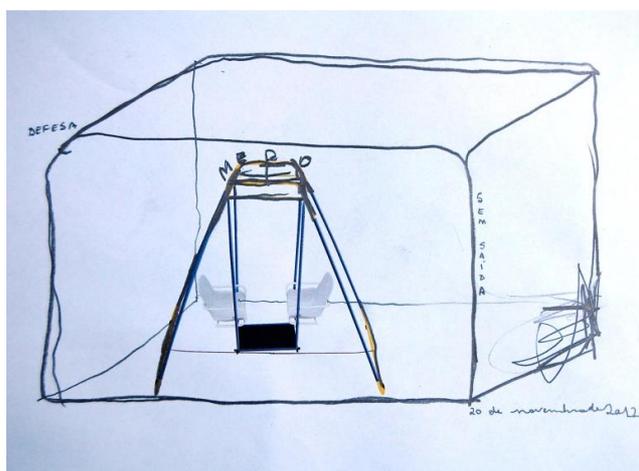
**Figure 1A.** 20 November 2012. Érico: “childhood, fear, lack of confidence”. P.’s considerations: here the theme of childhood is presented in the image of two empty swings, toys that could be fun with the presence of children. This image can refer to the lack of that movement in his childhood and/or his inner child.



**Figure 1B.** 20 November 2012. P.’s considerations: narrative of feelings related to childhood, lack of self-confidence and fear of flying. The presence of words shows that it is the rational dimension that acknowledges these feelings.



**Figure 2.** 20 November 2012. Érico: “I don’t know, it seems hair”. P.’s considerations: the double swing, empty, presents something like threads of hair on the top. The threads can be associated to the feminine element, long hair, the great mother, Medusa or a Gorgon.



**Figure 3.** 20 November 2012. Érico: “that’s it! Fear of going out”. P.’s considerations: the double swing, now protected inside of a cube, presents the words “defense”, “fear” and “no way out”, indicating the origin of Érico’s main complex.



**Figure 4.** 27 November 2012. Érico: “I had a nightmare with this figure. It’s a woman. A terror”. P.’s considerations: the female figure appears on her negative face, the big terrifying mother.



**Figure 5.** 27 November 2012. Érico: “I don’t know how to explain. These feet have holes. Are you seeing that they are torn?” P.’s considerations: the feet on the swing look like cockroaches, also dismal figures. The image reveals vulnerability – the swing that could give shelter, protect and lull, has holes and is dangerous, does not convey safety.



**Figure 6.** 27 November 2012. Érico: “the words comfortable, change and selfishness appear on the work”. Érico evaluates his situation in this way. He thinks he is housed in. P.’s considerations: Érico shows himself hidden in a den. The den is part of nature, a tree root or a stone. Therefore, it is part of Érico’s nature. It is not a temporary construction, fragile, but very strong and resistant.

The figure of the tree appears repeatedly (Figures 7 and 8), with a great canopy and roots, showing the strength of Érico’s personality; there is solitude. The suggestion is that the protection of the world is associated with known and long-standing aspects of Érico’s personality.



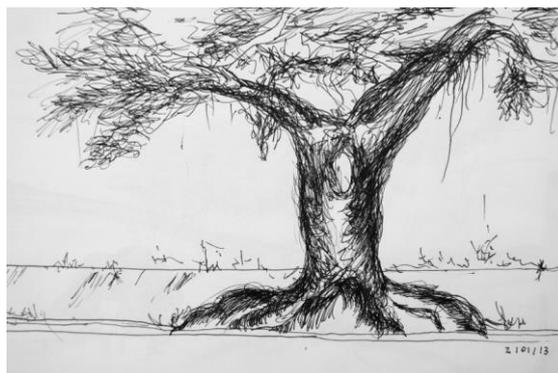
**Figure 7.** 28 December 2012. Érico: “I love drawing trees. I like this landscape. It looks a bit empty, lonely, but I like it”. P.’s considerations: this work seems to reveal other aspects of Érico’s, closer to conscious life, of his personality. There is a conscious isolation, made evident by the only tree on the drawing. Paths start to appear in the drawings and a root that crosses the road. It is highlighted, may be wounded. Anyway the fact of being on the surface permits getting in touch with Érico’s roots.



**Figure 8.** 28 December 2012. Érico: “lullaby. I like this landscape. It seems a bit empty, lonely but I like it”. P.’s considerations: Érico rests next to the tree that is the symbol of the total personality. There is safety to rest and little mobility in the human figure what may indicate a standstill in the communication ego-self.

### 2013 main topics

In 2013 Érico’s therapy is marked by the transition from the state of detachment from his inner world to a strong relationship with it. Diverse contents appear on the images in colors and movement, revealing psychic polarities, their discrimination and dynamics (Figures 9-27).



**Figure 9.** 2 January 2013. Érico: “the tree, I like it; I think it’s strong”. P.’s considerations: the tree, looking closely, shows its strength. It has plenty of roots and branches. The fact of not having fruits or flowers indicates detachment from the creation. The fact of not having color indicates that it is expressing the structural aspect of the psyche, seen from the perspective of reason.



**Figure 10.** 3 January 2013. Érico: “I think this work is strong. A road runs here”. P.’s considerations: in this work, a mountain has a gap that allows the passage of a road, in the middle. The mountain is natural, material and persistent. The work suggests an opening made in structural aspects of the psyche.



**Figure 11.** 15 January 2013. Érico: “this here I don’t know what it is. A wall, or something like that”. P.’s considerations: the tree canopy is attached to something pretty solid, like a wall or a tree trunk. It insinuates a union in a higher plane.



**Figure 12.** 15 January 2013. Érico: “this root is crossing the road. It grew”. P.’s considerations: in this drawing the tree root is enlarged and emphasized by the stronger tone, besides, it is traversing the road. The analogy with deep, original psychic pathways suggests the evidence of archaic contents, “in the middle of the way”, susceptible of observation and care in the conscious plane.

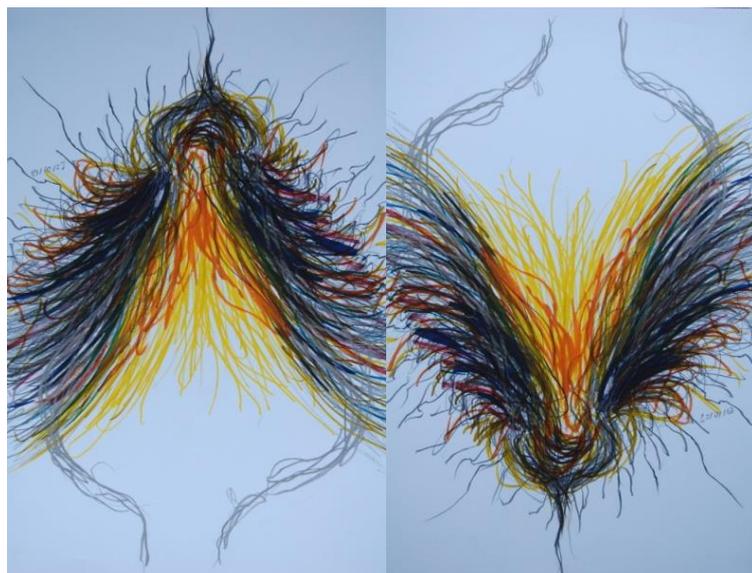


**Figure 13.** February 2013. Érico: “off-centred. There are always two paths, maybe one more defiant and the other less, but I always have to walk one or the other”. P.’s considerations: in this work the lines in circles, not rigid, in movement are divided in the middle, indicating a form of separation, reminding the differentiation of the opposites. Érico may be experiencing situations where he has to make choices, therefore, reinforce the values on which his ego is based.



*Figure 14.* February 2013. Érico: “loose lines, colorful strokes, pressing hard the crayon and superimposed”. P.’s considerations: in this work, the strokes are mixing various colors. There is a predominance of yellow, in the middle, what can suggest either the lack of differentiation (if the colors were not superimposed) or the start of a differentiation.

Érico sees that image (Figure 15) as liberation; the psychotherapist sees it as continence. The difference between the visions can suggest possibilities of the same symbol. The psychic continent can be allowing Érico’s liberation. It is also possible that the experience of liberation from the big mother is underway because of the act of flying. Érico sees it like a bird that wants to fly. The work suggests other possibilities, because it has in its structure a kind of vessel, similar to a uterus. The psychotherapist suggests the visualization of the image from another point of view like a uterus, from which a bird, or similar, can break free. The paradox of this work namely relates the themes of **continen**ce and **liberation**. Maybe the good mother, the experience of continence with freedom, can enable Érico to catch a glimpse of his desired flight.



*Figure 15.* February 2013. The image on the left (Figure 15A) is seen from Érico's point of view. On the right (Figure 15B), P. suggests another point of view. Érico: "I see a bird here that wants to fly. Finally it seems it can fly". P.'s considerations: the 15<sup>th</sup> work (first of the diptych composed by Figures 15 and 16, the two made in the same session) comes in various colors for the first time. The image presents a vessel, and on the outside, elements like threads or feathers that can separate from it or protect it.

For being a diptych – two works produced in the same session – it is recommended to observe them together, noting that Figure 16 suggests opposition to Figure 15. In the first work, the lines are stuck to a vessel; on Figure 16 they are free. Both situations ought to be present in Érico, showing two aspects of the same issue: on one moment free, on the other restrained.



*Figure 16.* February 2013, the second of the diptych composed by Figures 15 and 16. Érico: “I see with much joy these colors. An intense movement.” P.’s considerations: here the colors appear again with intensity, in countless strokes that again resemble hair, a web or net. The presence of the feminine is suggested in this work, now in a free and fluid manner.

Soon colors emerge in Érico’s expressive process. For the first time, number three appears in triptych: three paintings. (Figures 17-19). After the red, his favorite color, he paints the blue, new for him. We suggest that the blue might be representing the mental and spiritual world, symbolically associated to the sky. This more encompassing and delicate dimension permits distancing to the vision from a new perspective. Therefore, allows the accomplishment of a meaning for the experience. The last work connects the red and the blue, what indicates the connection of polarities, and of two spheres (carnal and spiritual) that were separated before.



*Figure 17.* February 2013, first of the triptych, Figures 17, 18, 19.



*Figure 18.* February 2013, this is the second of the triptych composed by Figures 17, 18, 19. Érico: “I find these colors beautiful. The red is my color. The blue showed up, it didn’t use to. It’s beautiful too. The three of them are together in this last series, very good I think”.

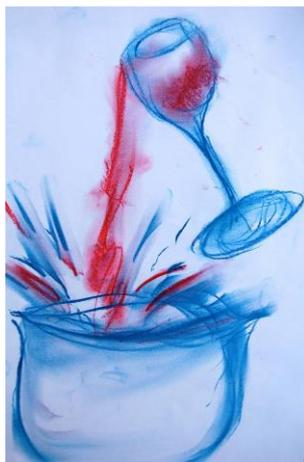


*Figure 19.* February 2013, this is the third of the triptych composed by Figures 17, 18, 19. P.’s considerations: this triptych indicates the overcoming of the polarities, in some level of Érico’s psyche. In dealing with the colors, two basic emotions coming closer can be observed. The color red with which Érico identifies since he was a child, is the first to appear. The blue color appears in its plenitude, in the second work. There are new emotions, different experiences in Érico’s life. In the third work it is evident that both emotions can be integrated. Both, the appearance of the blue and its integration to the red represent novelties in Érico’s psyche.

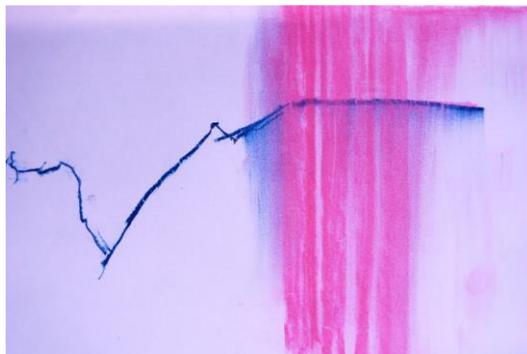
The triptych formed by Figures 17, 18 and 19 brings a dense symbol, with uncountable dismemberments. In the “Interpretação Psicológica do Dogma da Trindade” (Psychological Interpretation of the Dogma of the Trinity) Jung (1988) organizes a group of very interesting ideas about how and why the **trinity** is an essential element in Christian religion, according to psychological patterns. Initially, the author talks about the many appearances of the Trinitarian figure, however, unique in diverse religions of antiquity. After that, he attempts to answer why God is **trino** (three) and not **uno** (one) or **duo** (two). Why three people represent this archetype and not one or two? To explain this, the author resorts to philosophical concepts, showing that, according to the Greek, the number “one” without number “two” is not yet considered a number, because without the “other” there is no counting. Hence, God could not be only one person. Now, the number two is the representation of the opposite, of the other, of the contrast between good and evil. The tension between “one” and “two” takes to number “three”. The eternal indeterminacy of the binary is resolved with a third element. In mathematics, only with three points it is possible to form a polygon, it is, a figure with a meaningful area, whereas with two only a straight line can be formed. It is in the number three that, for the first time, a beginning, middle and an end appear. Then, this overcoming of the polarities starts to happen in Érico’s psyche.



*Figure 20.* February 2013, the first of the triptych composed by Figures 20, 21 and 22. P.’s considerations: there are two colors, the color of the glass and the color of the wine. The glass, the container, is blue. The wine is red. Blue is a color that starts to appear for Érico and evokes reason and/or the spirit. In fact, both thought and the spiritual dimension seemed distant from Érico so far.



**Figure 21.** February 2013, the second of the triptych composed by Figures 20, 21 and 23. Érico: “yesterday I drank wine and was admiring the beauty of the wine glasses, the wine, and the reflex on the light. I’m enjoying this phase”. P.’s considerations: triptych – two elements and the result of their union. Main themes: blue plus red, alchemy, and Dionysius. An integration of polarities occurs. There is a container to receive the wine falling from the glass. This container is a blue vessel. The symbolism connected to the vessel (feminine) and the blue (reason and spirit) are both new in Érico’s expressiveness. The container now seems to be trustworthy and allows the psychic transformation. In this work, the union of the red and the blue colors in the vessel suggest the alchemy.



**Figure 22.** February 2013, the third of the triptych composed by Figures 20, 21 and 23. P.’s considerations: here the pathway to transcendence from duality is suggested. The blue color tears the wall, and the red runs down on it. Again, the blue is on a permanent place, solid, and the red flowing. Here there is no container but a stroke where both colors can blend. The stroke suggests a break, a psychic wound, in this case associated to the wall, the stable part in the composition. Therefore, there is one more indication that there was a psychic rupture – possibly a flaw or wound in the experience. This rupture can be the way, the path to join aspects that were separated before in Érico’s psyche.

The images bringing glasses and the wine also convey the theme of Dionysius. Érico is a Dionysian type, as previously stated, and this expression allows him to get in touch with his nature, connected to carnal and spiritual pleasure. The union of the blue with the red shows here again the contact with dimensions other than the psyche and their possible connection. The last work (Figure 22) shows a fissure and through it the possibility of union of the red with the blue. Once more, the break –the psychic wound– can be the door to the union of Érico's polarities. In practice, this is a way of making contact with his nature and allowing to be strengthened by the experience.



*Figure 23.* April 2013. Érico: “I think this is beautiful: many colors, movement. Something came up”. P.'s considerations: the work starts to reveal a movement that did not exist before in Érico's work. A spiral form comes out from a circle represented on the left, bringing a possible movement of transformation.



*Figure 24.* April 2013. Érico: “I think the movement is beautiful”. P.'s considerations: the movement exists in waves. Some spaces start to be filled with colors. The experience of the psychic movement emerges and also the start of a relationship between them. There is not a union of colors here and it is not known what the color groups may symbolize.

Many works followed these, multiplying the possibilities of movements and colors. In work number 25 (Figure 25) a body appears with two highlighted openings (on the heart and the head) and many balloons lifting the body – again the theme of the wound is revisited. The possibility of flying, of leaving the concrete is emphasized, side by side with the contact with centers of pain and strength (that were extended as possible references to complexes). The latter are connected to the heart and the head (the hypothesis of relating to affection and thought). As it was already assumed, Érico's sorrows appear with emotional experiences and intellectual exercise. When his wounds are touched and it is possible to understand them in new ways, there is a chance of the complex becoming "de-empowered". In this sense, the image of the balloons is clear, when it shows something coming out of the heart and the head.



*Figure 25.* May 2013. Érico: “these balloons seem to be taking the man somewhere. There’s no pain. I think it’s colorful and cool... fly”. P.’s considerations: the diversity of colors indicates the expansion of Érico’s emotional experiences. Here the balloons enable ascension, the flight, the action of detaching from the concrete reality. This movement shows the accomplishment of one of Érico’s wishes. The site of the heart is highlighted in yellow. In the head there is something that comes out or in. Both parts may show wounds; on the other hand reveal openings, spaces of energy exchange.



*Figure 26.* June 2013. Érico: “I don’t know, I like it. It seems like there are two worlds, one on top, and the other underneath”. P.’s considerations: in fact, Érico’s work shows an upper part different from the lower part. The movement in the upper part is straight, with lines intersecting. The movement of the lower part is fluid, with more colors. Here two different dimensions are represented.



*Figure 27.* June 2013. Érico: “I liked this work. It looks like a canal”. P.’s considerations: this work seems to represent a canal, a pathway, or a river. When relating the previous work to this, one identifies that this may be the same image being expressed from two different points of view. The blue and the yellow refer to the central area of the canal and the red to the external area. The contents associated to the blue become the center of attention in the works.

A non-governmental organization calls Érico for an interview for the position of art teacher, with a salary of R\$ 1,500.00 a month. He feels humiliated with this salary, he believes that subtracting his expenses there would be nothing left for him and refuses the job.

In mid May 2013 he has sporadic homosexual relations while being married. His wife finds out and accuses him of being a traitor and homosexual. Érico feels very upset because he had never done anything like that so far, and had remained in sexual abstinence for years. He is mortified of having had homosexual relations and thinks that P. would be shocked with the fact; he takes a long time before having the courage of telling her, because for him, it is very difficult to speak about this with P.

P. asks him how he felt while having these relations, and Érico replies, "It wasn't bad". However, he never wanted to continue having homosexual relations and always tried to go unnoticed. He says that he used to talk with men on the Internet who also desired other men, and feels comforted with that. Érico affirms that there are a lot of people in the same situation, married men, with girlfriends, who feel attracted to people of the same sex.

At this time of the therapy, P. suggests him to watch the movie "*As aventuras de Pi*" (Life of Pi) (Lee, 2012). Érico watches the movie and comes back inebriated. He says he watched the movie many times. P. asks what caught his attention the most. He says it was the tiger – the relationship of the boy with the tiger. P. asks: "and your tiger?" Érico, puffed-up, says he never though he had a tiger. P. asks what would be his tiger side. Érico replies: "Hum strength, intelligence, independence, aggressiveness... I think I'm not very much of a tiger really!"

P. asks about which scene in the movie caught his attention the most, and Érico replies that it was the scene when the boy wants to put his hand inside the tiger cage and his father does not let him do so, and asks that he looks what a tiger does to a lamb. Pi's father then orders someone to place a lamb that is devoured by the tiger. The entire family watches de scene and the boy has to deal with this lesson for the rest of his life.

Before this narration, P. makes the following comment: "can this scene, perhaps, portray different facets of a naïve boy that has to be protected by his father, who is not naïve and knows how to take care of the instincts with a vision of reality and the consequences? There is also a tiger that simply wishes and needs to realize his instincts. Might the scene chosen narrate a key moment in your life?" Érico replies: "I think it's perfect. It's exactly that. I feel like that, frightened, but taking risks, wishing to know this tiger".

The 28<sup>th</sup> work (Figure 28) the theme of the tiger appears. P. had suggested the movie "*As aventuras de Pi*" (Life of Pi) (Lee, 2012) to enable the discussion about instinct and spirit. Érico watched it many times and was marveled with the movie. The time, the duration of the relationship between the protagonist and the tiger captures his attention. The feline image suggests that there is some work to be done to integrate the instinctive dimension.

Érico started to accept this in his life, with caution but, at the same time, wondered at the idea that he “has a tiger” in his personality.



*Figure 28.* June 2013. Érico: “these divisions, for me, have to do with the tiger’s cage bars, the tiger in the movie “Life of Pi”. P.’s considerations: here, intersection spaces acquire different colors and textures. The theme he deals with is prison, but there is exploration of a series of possibilities in these enclosed spaces.



*Figure 29.* June 2013. Érico: “here the tiger marks are expressed more clearly. I loved this”. P.’s considerations: Érico’s contact with his tiger side is expressed. In this work, the same spaces of intersection explored in the previous figure are highlighted and the lines do not appear any more. The tiger marks are emphasized.

Going through financial hardship and a permanent search for new jobs, Érico decides to take the risk and find a place to live by himself and split up definitively from his wife. A month after this decision, Érico finds a new job and, straight away, rents a house he can afford. A new stage in his life is

inaugurated. The works (Figures 30-39) that follow show this new space and his new joy of living.



*Figure 30.* July 2013. Érico: “this is my terrace. I love the view from my new house”. P.’s considerations: here a new psychic sphere is expressed: the ability to see the landscape in the distance. This landscape differs from the previous ones because it has colors. The terrace displays the same colors of the works that previously showed the flow, and there is the square as a new element.



*Figure 31.* July 2013. Érico: “it is the same terrace. Imagination flies...” P.’s considerations: here the same terrace appears in lighter and more vibrating colors. The clouds and balls in the air mark the space of imagination. This space is one of Érico’s achievements.

The Figures 32 and 33 compose a diptych. On Figure 33 (the second of the diptych) a nest can be seen and also a snake in an ascending movement, showing the release of a creative energy, from a container. Structurally the

mother and father complexes do not come up in their paralyzing and destructive forms any more, and the snake one of the most complex symbols, indicates the ascending movement of the psychic energy.



**Figure 33.** 10 September 2013, the second of the diptych. Érico: “untitled. I made these two drawings in the car, on my way here, in the moments the car was stopped in traffic. It looks like a snake. Underneath is the nest”. P.’s considerations: the threads, hair, plants that can be represented on the drawings, are now made in black and white. An ascending movement stands out from the furry base. This movement can be associated to the snake or to fire. Numerous mythic passages are associated with fire, indicating transformation.



**Figure 32.** 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013, the first of the diptych.

The symbology of the snake is complex, but it is almost certainly related to primitive aspects of the psyche. In searching an understanding that avoids univocal meanings and reductionism, the ascending movement can be observed as something that gets released from the material to the spiritual field. On the other hand, in the second drawing (Figure 33), the nest or container appears. This paradox, of something that disengages from the container, was the theme of previous diptychs. This diptych (Figures 32 and 33) indicates that the movements of sheltering and ascension are parallel and connected. In the next work (Figure 34), Érico starts to feel identified and to dedicate to other dimensions of life, including the spiritual, marked by the presence of a creative movement. Considering that Érico is rather attached to matter and hardly connects to the symbolic dimension, this symbol reveals its importance.



*Figure 34.* 3 October 2013. Érico: “blessing”. P.’s considerations: here a tree with yellow flowers appears in a street. Érico commented that he had recently seen a tree like this, very beautiful and was admired with nature’s beauty. The work presents the colors of the tree similar to those of the tiger previously mentioned, and also a triangle that evokes the number three, which has been showing the union of the opposites.

The following works (Figures 35 to 39) show joy, the desire to dance. They also show a freer relationship with the norms and rules, what suggests less rigidity, linked to the negative father complex.

Work number 35 (Figure 35) shows a volcano. Érico recognized he has hidden driving forces that emerge now and then. When presenting such a

primitive force of nature such as the volcano he showed that this is an extremely primitive movement, beyond control.



*Figure 35.* 5 November 2013, the first of the diptych composed by images 35 and 36. Érico: “these two drawings are called ‘Volcano’ and ‘Party’. I love dancing!” P.’s considerations: the drawing has hot colors and movement. The first is about the natural world, because the volcano belongs to nature. The second drawing of the diptych (Figure 36) presents many happy people, dancing; then, it leads to conscious and social life.



*Figure 36.* 5 November 2013, the second of the diptych composed by Figures 35 and 36.

This diptych is about movement and its manifestation in different dimension. Figure 35 indicates Érico's inclination to quietude, with a tendency to eruptions, from time to time. Figure 36 shows Érico's delight with the movement of dancing, and being in a social setting (which also appears, from time to time). It is possible to understand these as expressions of the same movement that appears in Érico's natural and social dimensions.

Works 37 and 38 (Figures 37 and 38) are made on ruled paper. Érico sees the lines as a prison, so he named the first work as "I get out of the cage, but then I go back in".

The coexistence with the rules and with Chronos, chronological time, is treated in psychotherapy. The issue of the archetypal father is, therefore, brought up. How to deal with the adaptation to the real world? Érico created, in the diptych composed by Figures 37 and 38, images that are at a party and go over the limits of the lines on the paper. The theme at issue ponders when and how to set the instincts free, and when and how to live with the lines, the rule. Érico's words showed apprehension regarding emotional and extroverted experiences, he seems to be afraid of getting lost in his instincts and end up falling out of the rule.



**Figure 37.** 12 November 2013, the first of the diptych composed by Figures 37 and 38. Érico: "here it's a party". P.'s considerations: this production suggests a drawing that goes over the limits imposed by the lines, fact that is used as part of the communication. Érico related the norm—theme connected to the father archetype—with the diverse colors, the theme of movement and social living. This production and the next show two possible relationships with the father archetype.



**Figure 38.** 12 November 2013, the second of the diptych composed by Figures 37 and 38. Érico says: “I leave the cage, but go back in”. Human versus metrics. P.’s considerations: the date described is Érico’s birthday. One suggestion is that he associates his existence with the theme of the work. Here the colors, numbers and letters are inside a rule. The lines are used as part of the work. Érico made numbers and colors according to the norm “the lines”. The theme of time (Chronos) and linear spaces suggest respect for what is determined by the father archetype.

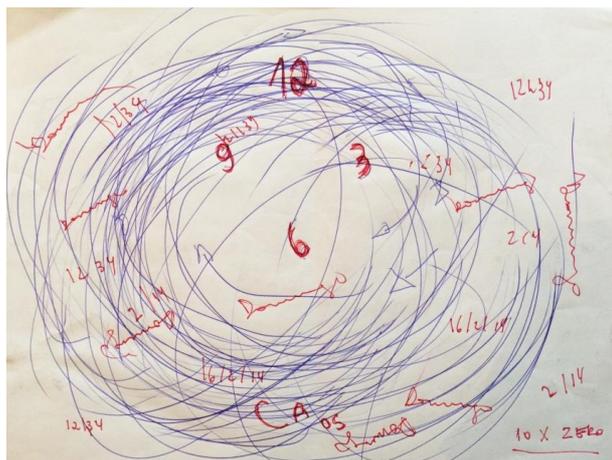


**Figure 39.** December 2013. Érico: “angels”. P.’s considerations: in this drawing an angel in the center is surrounded by various little angels, on a deeper plane. Érico affirmed: “I love angels”. The angels are the messengers of love (Eros). Hermes, who also has wings, is capable of promoting the communication between different worlds. The work indicates resources to “fly”, to abstract, and transit among the worlds of the abstract and the earthly, the spiritual and the material.

## 2014 main topics

Érico's everyday life concerns continue in 2014, having as main subjects money and the professional relationships. He brings to the session a drawing (Figure 40), showing the repetitive movements of the conscious mind, concerned with chronological time. The title is "Swirl" and it portrays everyday life worries.

Figure 40 is about a moment when a complex emerges. This happened because some kind of conflict arouse at school with Érico's students who challenged his authority. The return of the painful experience was worked by the resumption of his family episodes, which brought him back to the past, in the position of the black sheep of the family. This "error" was reviewed, with new glances and possibilities of understanding.



**Figure 40.** December 2013. Érico: "I made this drawing on my way here. I feel like this: in the middle of a swirl. I am taken by repeated thoughts and feel I don't have a way out". P.'s considerations: Érico showed, here, the functioning of consciousness, when he repeats information in circular motion.

Érico dreams of travelling, but he cannot afford. More than travelling in the concrete level, one understands that what he desires is to know a way of living with more freedom and pleasure, since his conscious life is repetitive and burdensome (Figure 41).



*Figure 41.* 14 February 2014. Untitled. P. asked Érico to think of a free mental state he would like to reach. In this session, Érico made this painting that mixes tourist cities' sights, showing that he would like to travel to different places.

However, at a deeper level, other kind of contents appears. In a dream, his parents' house burns down to the ground and he does not feel sad with that (Figure 42). Loss of old paternal and maternal references is revealed in this way. The psychotherapeutic work starts to look at death, because the change in the way he regards his parents allows Érico to review their image in a more understanding way.



*Figure 42.* 21 February 2014. Érico: "this is the representation of a dream I had this weekend. My family's house was burned and I was on top of the rubble and the coals. I had no feelings. I just saw the facts". P.'s considerations: the family's house is Érico's original psychic house. This dream shows that it was burned, destroyed, what indicates the loss of the initial system of references related to the mother and father archetypes. Érico no longer operated, psychically, with the same family dynamics, like when he started.

With the representation of a dream where the family's house is burned on Figure 42, the realization that the familial pattern of judgment does not belong to him brings to Érico satisfaction and the possibility to cast new glances and give new meaning to his existence. This is reflected on Figures 43 to 45.



*Figure 43.* 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014. Érico: “this is the representation of an image I saw on an old monocular. The image of my mother, behind the fence, with her arms akimbo, looking at me. She was at the front of my aunt’s house. I, on the field, was close to an animal, far from her”. P.’s considerations: this passage leads Érico to his independence from the family and a time when his mother used to say about him: “This boy likes life”.

Figure 42 is associated to Figure 43, both elaborated in the same session. In this sense, the works point at his psychological relationship with his nuclear family. Figure 43 displays something new in relation to the previous work: it is closer to the instincts, to an animal, on the field.

Figure 44 reveals that Érico, being able to look at the horizon, feels illuminated from above. The light is the representation of consciousness and the masculine that also indicates prospection, a relationship with consciousness and a higher dimension.



*Figure 44.* 28 February 2014. Érico: “I feel like this: illuminated”. P.’s considerations: in fact, the work shows an illuminated man. This luminosity can be associated to a contact with the numinous or divine world, because it comes from above.

Figure 45 shows two groups of people, one group of four, and other of two who are holding hands. Human relationships are presented with better prospects. Besides, the numbers “four” and “two” remind the members of his family and indicate that he no longer feels like an outsider, the “ugly little duckling”. The amplification evokes the wholeness (four) and the polarities (two) that represent an on-going human dialectic and inclusive relationship.



*Figure 45.* 28 February 2014. Érico: “here I see people looking to the horizon. I don’t know who they are”. P.’s considerations: on this work there are two groups, one of four and the other of two people. Four is the number of members of Érico’s nuclear family; and also the first number that refers to psychic wholeness. Two is the number of children in his family, but is the possible representation of a couple, that is holding hands on the drawing. The union (of different contents) and the observation of the horizon (of life) are indicated as possibilities.

Once the psyche was transformed, reviewed, and revisited, in its relationship with basic archetypes, a new vision of life opens up for Érico. He presents this new vision on Figure 46 (diptych composed by Figures 46A and 46B) – clouded in the beginning, but with the possibility of clearing up.

Figure 46A portrays a new dream. The image shows difficulty in seeing clearly the world. The experience did not disturb Érico. P. asked how he felt without seeing clearly the world outside and he said he did not like it. P. suggests this episode as a possibility of recognizing other forms of vision. Érico accepted the suggestion, but said, teasing: “I don’t like the sensation!”



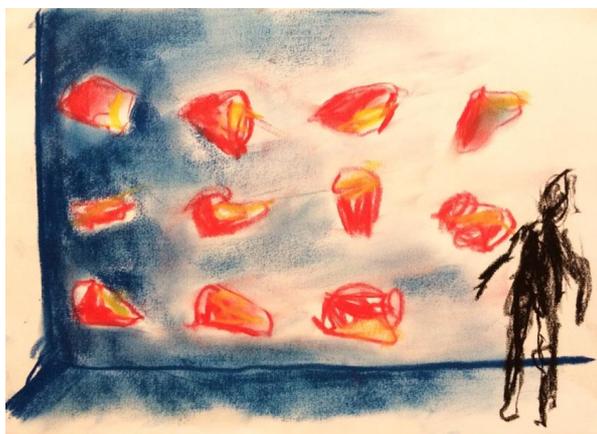
*Figure 46A.* 12 March 2014. Érico: “this drawing shows a dream I had. My eyes were a little irritated and blinking. I couldn’t see clearly”.

The second drawing (Figure 46B) was made on P.’s request, after a conversation about the act of seeing. It refers to the initial moment of vision, before the eye becomes blurry. This work points at the ability to see certain contents. The contents to which it refers are not known, what is known is the loss of acuity in the conscious perception of some contents.



*Figure 46B.* 12 March 2014. P.'s considerations: the smaller figure is only a detail showing how the work started.

Érico dreams of an art show where there are pieces of meat on the walls (Figure 47). He associates meat to the flavor, the color and the texture, coming from everyday experience. He believes that life has more flavor at this moment. In the dream he gives a piece of meat to his ex-wife, signaling reconciliation and retribution to such representation of the anima.



*Figure 47A.* 19 March 2014. Érico: "this is the image I had in a dream. I go into an exhibition and see a lot of meat hanging. In reality, it all was very beautiful. I choose three pieces and give them to my ex-wife". P.'s considerations: for Érico the meat is associated to texture and flavor. It signals association to the carnal, material, aspect of life. Érico said that he thinks his material life may be really tastier and more beautiful at the moment. He admitted that his ex-wife taught him a great deal about the material life.



*Figure 47B.* 19 March 2014. Detail of the previous work: piece of meat. P.'s considerations: here the focus of the previous work comes up – the flesh. It is made of vibrant colors, Érico's favorites. The dream indicates reconciliation with the carnal, material, aspects of life, related to the feminine.

At this moment of his therapy, Érico enjoys life more and seems to endure his challenges with a strengthened structure. Improves the relationship with his peers and makes friends. The love relationships are less threatening and he lives a homosexual love experience that lasts a few months.

His pragmatic life flows better, with work and relationships. Not without conflicts, though. He still feels revolt with authority figures (like the female directors of the schools where he teaches) who lie or manipulate information.

On Figures 47 and 48, Érico demonstrates he is stronger, capable of facing situations of fear and conflict.



*Figure 48.* 27 April 2014. Érico: “floorless. A path between two huge mountains and a blue horizon ahead. To be in this path, between two immense walls of stone and soil, is frightening. It seems as if at any time, when going through, they can suffocate me and I may get stuck between them. At this moment I cannot but observe beyond the walls that there is an indigo blue horizon, beautiful, immense too. The passage, for me, implied a moment of fear in my life; yet I moved forward. I didn’t know that I never retreated. Fear could intimidate me, but I never gave up”. P.’s considerations: Érico sees two walls and a blue horizon ahead and today he feels stronger than in the past to walk this path of confrontation, this journey. A possible amplification would permit the association of the walls to the archetype of the mother and the blue horizon to father’s archetype – the necessary transition for normal development.



*Figure 49.* 29 April 2014. Érico: “emptiness. White on white. Two whites, on a single emptiness? Is it an absolute void? But the sensation is. I feel empty, not full, with large lapses in my being, blank spaces. They leave me lighter, but perhaps rationality wants to fill them up”. P.’s considerations: the differentiation of the white sheet of paper to the small white piece in the middle is small. This suggests that contents of the self in their diversity need to be recognized by consciousness so that the personality differentiation may occur.

In September, Érico gets ill with chronic pleurisy, a disease that affects the pleura, the lungs. Figure 50 can be observed as an anticipation of this. After his return, even ill, Érico feels stronger and suffers less, in everyday life. He manages concrete facts more practically and with greater emotional detachment.

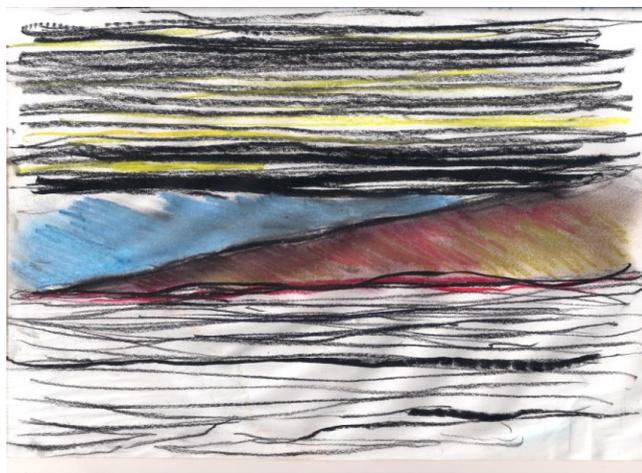


**Figure 50A.** 7 May 2014. Érico: “nightmare, viscera (expression of a dream). I am on a bed expelling my viscera. Something extremely scary, feel nausea and contractions observing the viscera being expelled, still vigorous and pulsating. There is a dark shadow together with a yellow light. I vomit the pain that bothers me. I get rid of it in a chaotic moment in my life. Either they stay with me, inside me and dominate my life and body, or I put them out of me. Although frightening it was a relief. I felt light with my own being”. P.’s considerations: Érico sees himself in relation to his viscera, that have shadow and light (what would they represent in symbolic terms?); something that, at the same time, scares and relieves.



**Figura 50B.** 7 May 2014. The cover with a hole that allows seeing part of the person represented.

Work number 51 (Figure 51) shows a path to a blue horizon. The opening is presented upwards in the way Érico sees it. It is, therefore, an ascending path. At that moment, Érico did not show fear of connecting to the new, which presents both in the contact with his inner world and the contact with the novelties that life may present. The next work (Figure 52) presents a free path, solid and safe, and it alludes to the known, to the ego, to consciousness.

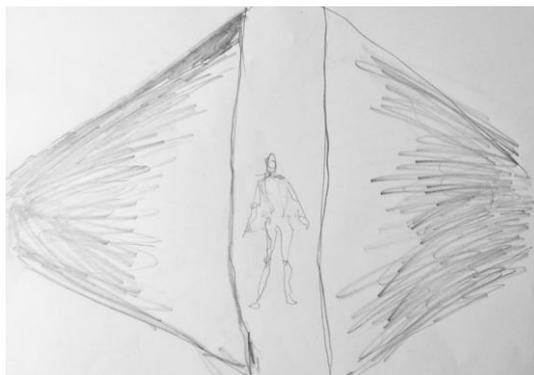


*Figure 51.* 29 April 2014. Érico: “contact. Three moments. Straight lines on top, more tangible forms in red and blue and more fluid lines below. I always have to make decisions, and I have managed to be more practical within my limits, because anxiety decreased”. P.’s considerations: the work sets two colors and dimension in contact. Such confrontation of opposites requires a strong enough personality and this seems to be the pathway Érico determined: to endure confrontations more.



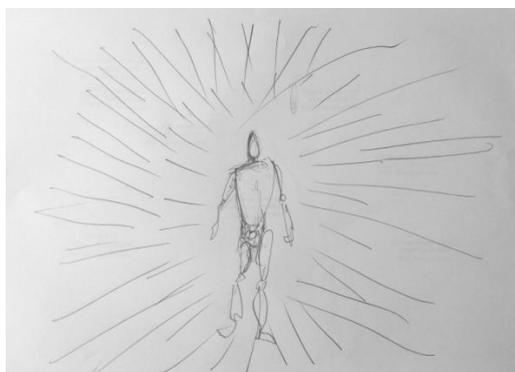
*Figure 52.* 12 July 2014. Érico: “stable pathway. A defined pathway and the sun at the end. I am happy to see the sun ahead even when I don’t know where this is going”. P.’s considerations: the work shows a defined path, of a single color, and the variety of colors on the sides. The theme of the previous works is resumed: the longer the distance between consciousness and what is in the unconscious, the smaller the integration. On the other hand, the ego needs the structure to get in touch with the unknown and with diversity. In this work the known is emphasized, offering Érico serenity.

The next work (Figure 53), in black and white, shows Érico contained by two walls that have an opening to various external dimensions. As his associations indicate, it shows the discovery or confrontation with the need to always walk between obstacles or free and fluid passages. The fact they are made in black and white again indicates structural aspects. At that moment, Érico looked more structured to face the obstacles and possibilities life may offer.



**Figure 53.** July 2014. Érico: “untitled. I am between two big walls at the exit of a corridor or pathway. The discovery or confrontation with the need to walk between obstacles or free and fluid passages. At the end and in front of every door, there is always something new or known”. P.’s considerations: Érico feels strong enough to confront the possible paths.

Figure 54, that shows a mandala, in Érico’s case, indicates centralization, felt as a perception of him “materialized”, showing evolution in his relationship with himself.

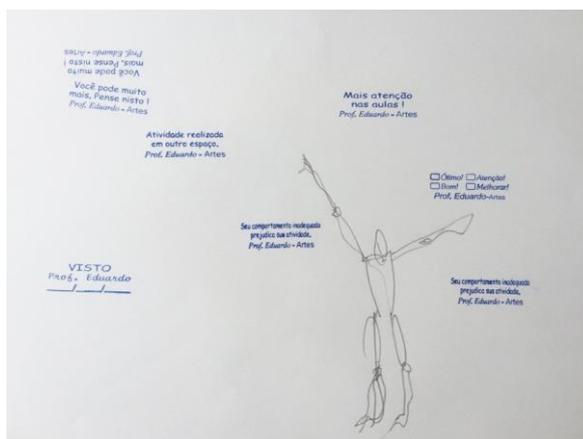


**Figure 54.** July 2014. Érico: “I see myself still, reflecting on what direction to follow. The lines suggest light or directions around my body. A more concrete moment, when I materialize and present my body, not only my spirit. I feel stronger with this verticality and ground”. P.’s considerations: the man at the center of the image is linked to the outer world through the lines around him; the work is a mandala, and as such, emphasizes the centralization of the personality.

The works of the beginning of 2014 brought the experience of being illuminated and having company to observe the horizon. The reddish and yellowish colors signaled vitality and warmth.

In May 2014, Érico made a painting on which he had to live with his viscera and expel them (Figure 50A). The work has a cover with a hole through which only a small part of the image can be seen. The image is intense, and in that session, little understanding was reached about it. The subjective interpretation would lead to a search for visceral factors that Érico should confront – this information was not clear for P. at the moment it arose. In September 2014, Érico had chronic pleurisy, a disease that involves inflammation of the pleura, the membranes covering the lungs in the thoracic cavity. Given the peculiarities of this work and its clear allusion to the disease, may be considered the hypothesis that this image revealed in advance the disease Érico developed later.

Érico makes two images (Figures 51 and 52): the first reveals straighter lines above and below and more tangible forms in red and blue in the center; refers to an intermediation between two worlds, suggesting a possible transition from the contact between them. The next work brings a free, solid and safe pathway. Refers to the known, to ego and consciousness.



**Figure 55.** 2014. Érico: “theatrical pedagogy. The figure is me. Lost, rethinking my role as an educator or ‘madman’, in front of values and people: parents, children, directors, mad and labeled characters, hostage of schooling and education”. P.’s considerations: the human figure, surrounded by eight stamps “squeezes in” in the space left. The composition contrasts the pre-formatted stamps against the mobile and adaptable human figure, indicating flexibility, necessary to the personality.

The relationships are strengthened and it is easier for him to set the limits. The disease, in its turn, leads him to think in the lung and its symbology. **Pneuma**, or air, refers to the connection with one of the vital elements for living. The expressions of the positive archetype of the father, such as the expansion of the ability to discriminate through thought, collaborate with the symbolic research.

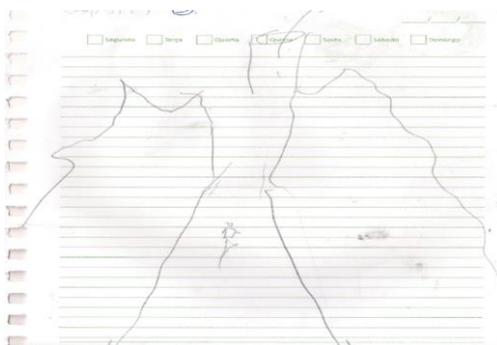
The sequence of figures (Figures 56-70) about angels reveals a new possibility in life. P. suggests the nature of Hermes, capable of transiting between worlds, and of Eros, able of making love bonds. Érico recognizes in himself, at this moment of his life, a rare ability for being diplomatic in his professional environment and not getting too involved with the problems of the school where he teaches. For Érico this is a moment of strengthening his self-confidence; the aptitude to fly, he longed for in the beginning of the therapeutic process, gets evident.



*Figure 56.* 30 July 2014, the first of the triptych composed by Figures 56, 57 and 58. Érico: “open windows, but without ‘wings’ with boxes below. The call to fly... freedom and the boxes of the soul weighing not enabling the flight. An immense angel observes the windows of the soul, on the third plane and below him, smaller angels overflying the passageways of the walls. Smiling angels call me to fly... without fear”. P.’s considerations: the theme of the angels reveals a stage when Érico rambles between worlds: matter and spirit. This experience brought adaptation to the different dimensions of life and the malleability to transit between them.



**Figure 57.** 30 July 2014, the second of the triptych composed by Figures 56, 57 and 58. Érico: “valleys, mountains or abysses observed by big angels, also windows with wings, far away.” P.’s considerations: on this drawing it is observed how distances are large between the big angel’s wings and the windows with wings. Érico sees valleys, mountains, and abysses in the work, what offers an idea of the distances he started to wander, and the dimensions of life he started to tie after discovering and connecting to his angel side.



**Figure 58.** 30 July de 2014, the third of the triptych composed by the Figures 56, 57 and 58. Érico: “again walls, a passageway and I between them. For the lack of color and mass, the few lines make the image lighter. Walking, for me, has to do with time that goes away too quickly, and so, just walking may not help find anything you want but, on the other hand, we deal with the unexpected and we can abandon the patterns and the acquired references.” P.’s considerations: Érico seeks and wishes to live and be happy, but he is scared of the unexpected and the dimension of the new on his path. The drawing demonstrates this experience, when it displays the smallness of the man faced with the grandiosity of the walls.



**Figure 59.** 11 August 2014. Érico: “sky and earth. Solid cubes of different sizes on the floor. Wings, a greater force around, sheltering, protecting or embracing those strong shapes. They are rooted, rigid in the space. Am I the shapes or the angel protecting me, so I am more flexible with myself and fly?” P.’s considerations: on this drawing the counterpoint between matter and life, the stillness and the potential for movement, are highlighted. Érico indicates he recognized that polarities belong and translate own contents.



**Figure 60.** 11 August 2014. Érico: “I with an immense wing on my right side. But the left is missing. There is an asymmetry, an imbalance. Having an immense strong wing may give us the sensation of strength for higher flights, but a single wing does not lift me, does not help me take off. I need the other to go ahead. Is it necessary to conquer, tame, travel with a single wing? What should I do? Reality asks for time, and knowing how to deal with it will make us have the other wing within what’s possible. For the rest, going ahead does not depend entirely of me”. P.’s considerations: the awareness that there is an asymmetry or an absence led Érico to humility, that was lacking since the symbol of the angel appeared. The disease made him get in touch with some kind of lack that does not have an exact meaning yet.



**Figure 61.** 1 September 2014. Érico: “observers. Wings resting on a line. I feel observed by them. It is good because they seem to be my partners for protection, orientation, a compass and stimulus. I believe they are angels, mediators between heaven and us, here on earth. With wings I can advance more or retreat. I can land on soft land, as well as on swamps and arid deserts, and cushion any accident”. P.’s considerations: in this drawing the readiness to fly and land is marked, and also the fact that the wings protect him.



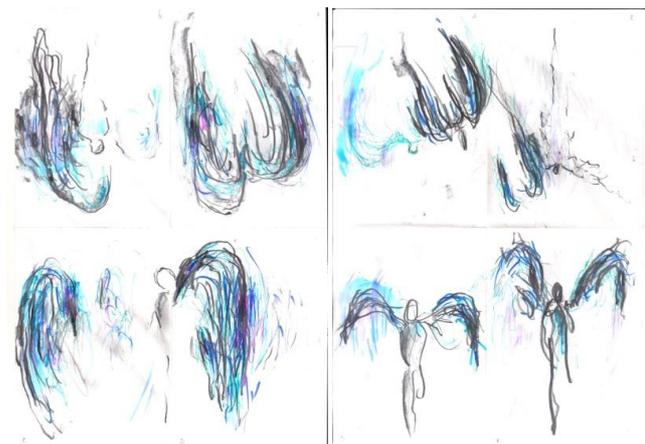
**Figure 62.** 1 September 2014. Érico: “ah, this beautiful and agile flight that brings me reverie. I see myself with a beautiful and strong wing, immense and very light. My body is suspended thanks to the impulse of the breeze that pushes me to the clouds. As a little boy I already wanted to fly. I was a young man that took off, however I wasn’t tough enough to face life. I survived. Right now I feel more mature, a sensation never felt before. My wings are neither cut, nor stuck, they are beautiful and strong”. P.’s considerations: at the moment, Érico identifies himself with the angels and their ability to fly. This drawing revealed that. This identification brought the freedom he desired since he was a child and that he is experiencing intensely. At this time Érico is seeing only the bright aspects of the wings in detriment of the dark ones, present in any symbol.



**Figure 63.** 2 September 2014. Érico: “a birdcage or a cage with wings flying. Birdcage or cage implies a tiger or a bird. Both the birdcage and the cage are limitations, bordering spaces that hinder the possibility of freedom and flying. But, it’s simple: one puts on two wings and one can fly, even in those spaces. Both the bird and the tiger, sensitivity and aggressiveness, instinct, hunger of becoming strong as a man, seeking to break references rooted in my formation. Before I didn’t fly or even tried, I didn’t live. Today I know I can fly even more, but I understand that it is a process and I’m respecting its time”. P.’s considerations: again, the act of flying is connected to materiality. This is inferred from Érico’s verbal proposition of dealing with his limitations.



**Figure 64.** 15 September 2014. Érico: “the expression of a dream. My mother and I are on a terrace in the city observing, below, an immense temple with a leader and only women with black shawls on their shoulders. Many women. Behind the altar, the scene is a great chain of mountains; I couldn’t go. It was only for women. I took my mother to the first step of the stairs, said goodbye and kept observing from the terrace her long walk, going down so many steps. It seems a rite of passage, change, goodbye. Perhaps a rupture and my liberation. Today, I can say things directly and more assertively to my mother”. P.’s considerations: this work portrays a dream where the mother, basic representation of Érico’s maternal experience, walks down steps towards a religious ritual. This aspect in Érico can connect to a larger dimension and accept its determinations. It was about a transformation of the experience of the mother archetype.

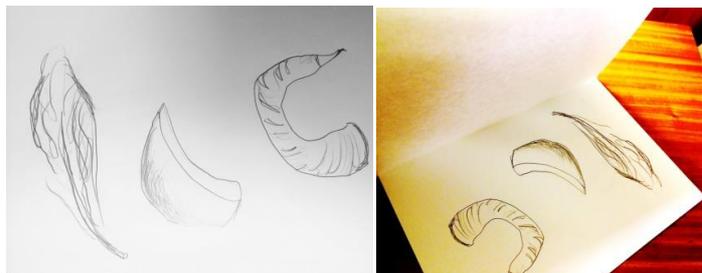


**Figures 65A and 65B.** 11 August 2014. Érico: “the expression of a dream. I, in a process of construction and deconstruction of my own being. Wings in different moments (unique, fragmented, large; rising flights, falls). The blue color minimizes the process, softens, without so many pain and restlessness. The oscillations of life. I see myself between advancing and retreating. I have the wings, but I don’t know yet how to fly and deal with the challenges of that time”. P.’s considerations: this work displays eight angels, in different positions. It expresses the potentials of Érico’s angel side, although he verbalizes his limits.

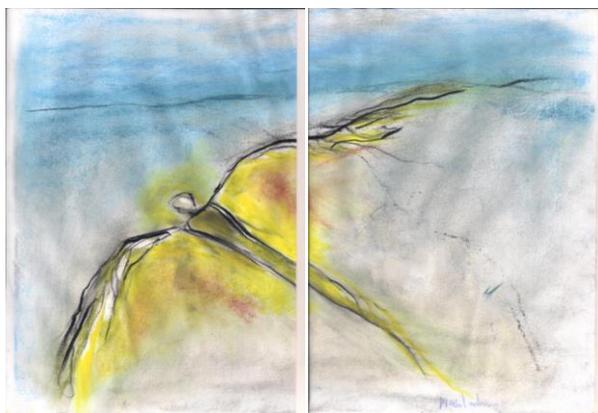


**Figure 66.** 28 October 2014. Érico: “the lightness of what is heavy and the weight of what is light. I see opposites. The mass of a shaded form and the lightness and fluidity of a wing and its lines. A pair. A duo or a pair? Here I add, on the side, one of my lungs, sickened by a pleural hemorrhage. One of the sides of my lung, vital organ of the air, of breathing, of rhythm, clashes with the supple and beautiful wing on the other side. In this way, my flight was interrupted. The possibility, here, versus the impossibility. Ironies of life?” P.’s considerations: a contraposition between the wing, light, and the lung, dense, indicates polarities to be unified. The disease brought to light a dense and impenetrable content that needs to be integrated to consciousness.

In real and concrete life, Érico managed to say things in a more direct and assertive way to his mother, without feeling hostage of his determinations.

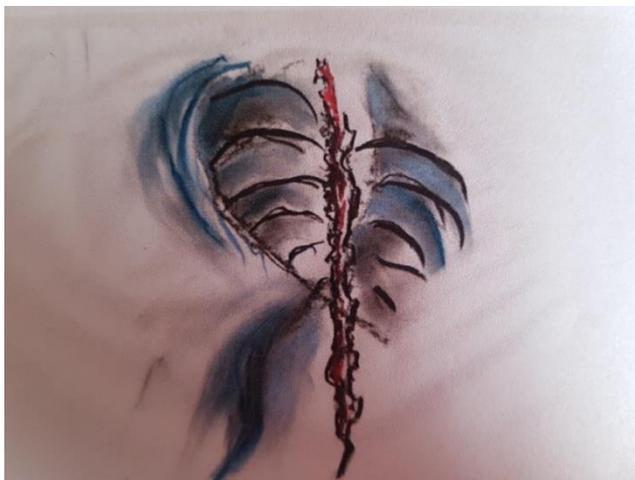


**Figures 67A and 67B.** 23 April 2014. Érico: “fluid lines which gradually stiffen in a metamorphosis. Contemporary life reinforces it to the extent that we must survive with our shell”. P.’s considerations: here the work seems to be of shells, leaves or roots. It signals a passage from the abstract to materiality. Curiously, the figures are made on a paper that folds, it has a cover, (Figure 67B). Érico’s approach to the concrete world and the development of a persona, even incipient, can be indicated by this work.



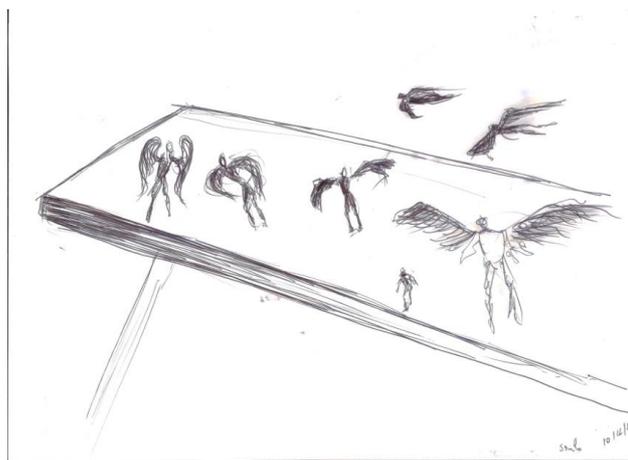
**Figures 68A and 68B.** October 2014. Érico: “gliding. Flying in complete delight, gliding under the blue and indigo sky. The light is on my body. In this flight, my body levitates, glides, and I felt the lightness of being and not being. A moment when I let go of the tons of awful sensations, bitterness and fear that I went through. I observe from above the scenery, the outline and forms of the earth. I see people living, enjoying, and even better, I myself feel ecstatic. Yes. No matter how redundant this may be, to fly is to dare, to risk, as in life this is implicit. Despite I am reconstructing my life, I got a great deal from 2013 to now”. P.’s considerations: again the plenitude of the act of flying is expressed pictorially and verbally. There are no indicators of integration of the dark contents observed before and after Érico’s disease.

Work number 69 (Figure 69) displays defined, softer lines, that evoke the lungs, the air, the exhaling, the fragile membrane (pleura). Érico speaks about the “hollow” that is light, enables to fly more smoothly. The hollow here is not bare emptiness. Today there is a greater balance between the tensions of life and the opposites.



*Figure 69.* Érico: “hollow”. P.’s considerations: this work shows blue and black colors linked to the lungs, possibly signaling a way of dealing with his limitations. It connects Érico’s sick organs, the lungs, to the wings. The organ symbolizing the air, the pleura, is the part of Érico’s body that is affected. There is a symbolic relationship between the air—the space Érico loves—, and the sick lungs. It is necessary “to descend” to the experience to understand its dark aspects and elaborate new ways of dealing with the difficulties.

Érico’s last work (Figure 70) portrays a dream, where angels fly over a table; this situation brings comfort for him. Érico feels he can have the freedom of coming and going wherever he pleases. The table, related to concreteness, is no longer a reference for his life. At this moment, Érico holds the possession of his psychic life, of his soul, and is able to transit between worlds lightly and painlessly.



**Figure 70.** 10 December 2014. Érico: “expression of a dream. From above I saw a table full of angels of different sizes, some on it, looking around, others overflying and I way above, observing something so magical. They looked like toys, miniatures. The table moves but the angels don’t fall, they fly. There is a tension of opposites, sometimes large figures, sometimes minute. None belittles the other. The minute refers me to coziness. In this image I can’t see anything associated to current life. I don’t know why, nothing comes to mind”. P.’s considerations: the lightness and mobility of the angels protects him from falling from the table when it tilts. Synchronically, after this dream Érico was dismissed from his two jobs, because of the time of his leave to treat his pleural hemorrhage. He had to find other jobs. This dream and his understanding empowered him to take hold of his strength and ability to deal with adversity.

### Psychodynamics comprehension hypothesis

Érico is empathetic and speaks carefully since the start of the therapy. He expresses himself fluently and is spontaneous and outgoing in the sessions. He does not leave any doubts of his sensitivity regarding the world of images. The questions he repeats over and over in the first few months are: “why me?”, “what did I do wrong?”, referring to the many losses he suffered and to the intimate and pragmatic difficulties he faces.

Érico seems to have developed a very successful practical life for years. But in the last eight years, after a sequence of emotional and material losses he cannot re-edit his life. The old ways no longer serve him and he cannot see any possibilities ahead.

The reading of the initial indicators Érico offered signalizes that the inner world was neither valued, nor investigated, in the first half of his life. He develops an extroverted behavior, based on his abilities and he is successful from a pragmatic point of view. However, there is no wider exploration of his psychic life that includes the existence of a dimension transcending his ego and extending bridges between the inner and the outer worlds.

Érico suffers the accentuated action of complexes. He feels threatened by a feeling of inferiority and shows the marks of negative mother and father complexes and their consequences on his psychological dynamism. He can be considered as a puer-dionysian type, a person who loves seducing, but does not like routine and demands. He is used to escape commitment because he feels abused and humiliated. The complex reveals a mixture of overindulged and devalued person. He is a seducer: fits perfectly well in the position of protected child. In the structuration of the ego, his awful relationship with his father possibly led him to the identification with his mother. This reinforces his relationship with the feminine and weakens his relationship with the masculine in itself. He considers himself not only different but also wrong, the “ugly duck” of the family. He stays in the shadows of the family system, a situation that is reinforced by the fact of being self employed, not a great earner and possibly homosexual. Érico is sensitive and loyal to the attachments he makes, he only takes time to trust them. For him the intellectual exercise is an inferior function that triggers complexes. He understands literally what is said and takes a while to understand the symbolic dimension. His development depends on the intellect and sensation, probably linked to dark contents.

Because of that, it is the initial proposition that Érico contact his unconscious and recognize its beauty, amplitude and autonomy, appreciating, at the same time, what he accomplished in the first half of his life. From that, he maybe starts to identify the transience of life and the process he experienced –and still does– as natural, as susceptible of meaning. The therapeutic conduct does not answer Érico’s questions –which reminds us the questionings of Job, the biblical character– but throws gazes on his entire story, seeking to widen his vision about himself.

In “Resposta a Jó” (Response to Job), Jung (1986b) discusses the Book of Job, from the Christian Bible, in the light of analytic psychology. Job is a faithful man, who seeks to understand Yahweh’s actions, which cause him great suffering. Yahweh, in his turn, does not reflect – he is dedicated to his own interests. He is whole, and as such, incorporates good and evil. Using Jung’s words, he incorporates his shadow. Jung’s thesis is that Job and Yahweh undergo an evolution after the impact: they are forced to elevate their levels of consciousness. Job’s sufferings regarding Yahweh are similar to what is observed in Érico. From the experience of life and its dark side (which goes back to Yahweh’s evil), Érico is compelled to transform his life and his consciousness. In his case, this path becomes creative, after he started his psychotherapeutic treatment, because he starts to look into and deal with himself and his life in a new way.

Another reading of Érico’s suffering is based on Hillman’s proposition (1999). As puer, Érico does not want to be expelled from Eden. He expects to be understood, confirmed, blessed and recognized as he is and for his proximity and intimacy with God. When this does not occur he feels profoundly betrayed. Nevertheless, this betrayal is necessary because leads him to a new awareness of reality. To exit Eden is to start a new life. In this vision, betrayal

does not oppose love, but is contained in it. The deeper the love, the greater the possibility of being betrayed, since this betrayal is the condition for the fall from Eden and for the development of the whole personality.

### Countertransference

P. perceives in Érico a hurt and scared boy and feels great empathy for him. If there is a danger in the countertransference is that P. may “take him on her lap”, protect him too much. Naturally P. understands his pain, but believes that he might try to leave his comfort zone that, in reality, is a place of death and torture.

Érico has difficulty in believing life, because he feels undervalued “by others”, always. In this sense, P.’s job is to give back to him the responsibility of attributing his own value, instead of expecting that from others. In the countertransference, his attitude causes discomfort, both for the intensity of his suffering and for the fact of placing himself in a dependent and powerless position. P. respects his pain, but she questions his attitude of placing himself as a helpless victim of situations.

Érico feels more than thinks; this is, for being of the emotional type, thought for him is a lesser function. P. suggests to work with reflection, so instead of doing it by herself, P. makes questions that lead Érico to reflect within his aptitudes. For him it is difficult to look with detachment and identify in the situations certain mechanisms based on logic. P. uses to point that out many times, knowing that there is this difficulty with detachment, because the complex influence takes over and clouds his thoughts.

### Case reading based on images

The images Érico produced during his therapeutic process and were worked over in the sessions allow many interpretations and amplifications. Several extensive and rich explorations are possible with all of them. Because of the limits of this study only the most important contents have been described.

Érico produced his first images basically in black and white; they have few colours. They express the structure of the psyche and show the absence of the child who plays and the feelings of fear of flying and protection (closing up), indicating the action of a negative mother complex.

P. raised some of the hypothesis of understanding from Érico’s responses to the following question: “from your colocations, what do you think such image can be communicating about you?” Once this dialogue was established between P. and Érico, the unconscious responses were being assimilated and incorporated to his conscious life.

## Final considerations

This work resulted from the union of a research project on the use of expressive resources in psychotherapy with a case study under Jungian perspective. The central idea is to show the existing coherence between Jungian theoretical framework and the use of expressive resources in psychotherapy.

Although the clinical experience of several analysts reveals the richness of the use of visual art in psychotherapy, and many scholars support on the theory different methods of application and reading of expressiveness, the issue generates discussions. We understand that this is so, in first place, due to the complexity of Jung's work. The ways of understanding this complexity are diverse and also the methods of action based on theory. Adds to this the wealth of expressive resources that allow numerous methods of application.

This case study, together with the images analyzed in the process and their interpretations, translates the psychic movements described in the theory, with great clarity. Because of this, expressiveness is considered to enrich psychotherapeutic practice and also study and research in analytic psychology. Furthermore, using expressive production can be a therapeutic facilitator for certain typologies, multiplying the resources of the approach, when used carefully and rationally.

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